

OCEAN DRIVE



LIGHTS, CAMERA, MIAMI!

SOON-TO-BE-BUZZED-ABOUT FLICKS ARE SEEN FIRST AT THE **MIAMI FILM FESTIVAL**.
BY BRETT SOKOL

The Miami Film Festival is back for its 34th edition with 10 days of eye-opening documentaries, provocative foreign flicks, and even a few Oscar hopefuls. Director of Programming Jaie Laplante explains how it all came together.

Are there any films that just scream Miami? I have a good sense of the pulse of the city. If I'm charged up and excited about a film, I think the public here will be, too. **Tell us about opening night.** We're going to present Israeli filmmaker Joseph Cedar's new film, *Norman*. He's a two-time Oscar nominee, for *Beaufort* in 2007 and *Footnote* in 2011. This film stars Richard Gere as a New York fixer who accidentally meets the future prime minister of Israel. A few years later, when his friend ascends to power, the story plays out in terms of what power and influence really mean. Gere is extraordinary in the film, and he'll be here opening night. **What makes *Norman* a good fit for kicking off the festival?** Miami always wants something different. One year I opened with a documentary, *20 Feet from Stardom*, which went on to win an Academy Award. I've opened with an animated film, *Chico and Rita*. I was looking this year for something that spoke to the mood and culture of our city. A thoughtful, powerful drama was the ticket! *The Miami Film Festival runs March 3–12; miamifilmfestival.com.* ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SETH BROWARNIK/STARTRAKSPHOTO.COM (EDELSTEIN); LOAMIS RODRIGUEZ (BELLUCCI); COURTESY OF MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (STILLS); ALBERTO E. TAMARGO (GUGINO)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: David Edelstein and John Turturro at the 2014 Miami Film Festival; Monica Bellucci at the Marquee presentation of *Ville-Marie*; stills from *El Amparo* (TOP) and *Santa & Andrés*; Carla Gugino, Jeremy Piven, and Sarah Jessica Parker at the *Miami Rhapsody* 30th-anniversary celebration in 2013; a still from this year's opening-night film, *Norman*.